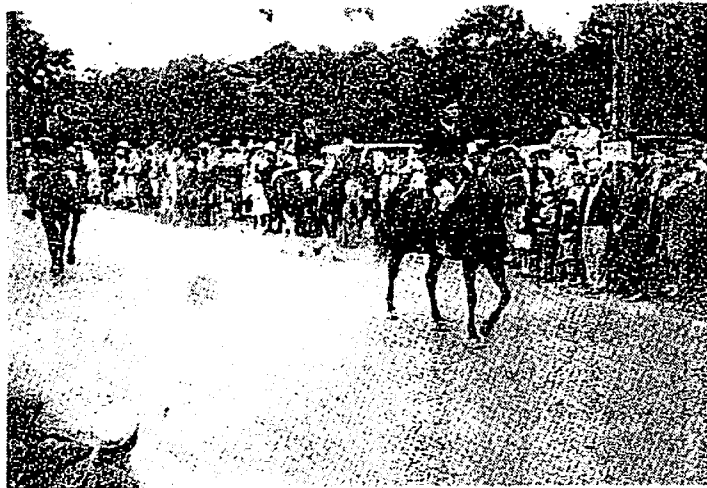


MEET THE ELDER STATESMAN

"My compensation here in Duxbury," says Walter Prince, "has been knowing the great people who have done so much to make our town so beautiful." One of our compensations as editor of the *Duxbury Clipper* has been working with Walter Prince of Washington St. Several years ago we called him our favorite elder statesman and the appellation stuck. Walter, to whom we dedicate this Silver Anniversary issue, is now known as the elder statesman "who has always given his best for Duxbury."

"That's what makes a small town good -- having a man like Walter Prince," says our Town Historian, Dorothy Wentworth. "A town needs people like that."



July 4th parade in the 1930s. Leading the parade is Chief Marshall Walter Prince flanked by Eben Briggs (left) and Lawrence Whitney (right), all on horseback.

Background

Walter was born on Enterprise St. in a house now owned by Elwin (Barney) Barnard. The farm, owned by his father, Warren Prince, one of the town's early constables, is about a mile from Saint George St. Garage, which Walter owns and operates with the help of his wife, Joyce, who keeps the books. As a youngster, Walt, as he likes to be called when he is not in an elder statesman mood, cut wood for the kitchen stove, which was used for cooking and heating, and lugged buckets of water for the household from wells on Enterprise St.

One of 5 graduates of Partridge

Academy, he prepared for Dartmouth College (where he majored in economics) at Cushing Academy and Powder Point School. During his college summer vacations he peddled fruit and vegetables from house to house, and sold luscious strawberries which he raised himself. In undergraduate days at the "refined lumber camp" known as Dartmouth College, Walt worked in the grill before becoming head waiter in the Commons, the dining hall for freshmen.

First PTA President

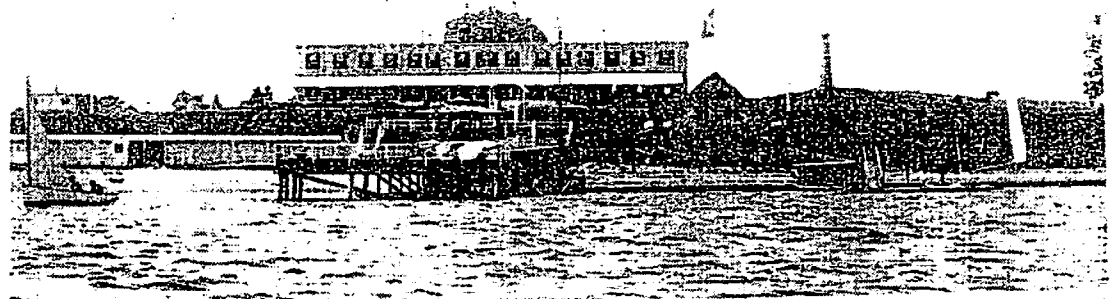
Walter was president of the town's first PTA before being elected to the School Committee on which he served from 1937 to 1942. In 1942 he was elected to the board of selectmen who in those days also functioned as assessors, board of health, and finance committee. For several years his colleagues on the board were Philip Delano and Charles Crocker.

"Those were exciting days," recalls former selectman and state representative Francis Perry. "Exciting days for all of us when the politics of this young crowd -- Walter Prince, Philip Delano and others -- used to be determined at the dances at old Island Creek Hall."

Life in Duxbury was simpler then. The school budget in 1942 was \$51,000. Today it is \$4.3 million. Total expenses of the town were less than a quarter of a million, as compared with today's figure of \$8.6 million.

In 1951 Walter declined to run for re-election. "I think I can do more for the town outside of office," he told the *Clipper*. He became supervisor of parks and playgrounds, a job he still enjoys, because he loves to help young folks. Today's kids lack respect for people and property, he thinks. "They don't have enough to do. Their parents give them too much."

Below, Myles Standish Hotel. Note NYC flag flying from clubhouse on right. This was the site of the yacht club in 1895.



The house shown above is half of the old Myles Standish Hotel. Formerly owned by Mrs. J. Anderson Lord, it is now the property of Faneuil Adams of 286 Marshall St. Walter Prince moved it to its present site.

A life member of Duxbury Post 223, A.L., Walter was one of the founders of "Duxbury Days," and in recent years he has organized and run the annual July 4th Parade. He is a member of the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society. Just as he has, over the years contributed flatbed trucks for floats in the July 4th Parade, he has carted and moved equipment for the Society without ever sending a bill. Walter is a member of the Duxbury Volunteer Firemen's Association, The First Parish Church and the Duxbury Masonic Lodge.

Very Active

At the age of 77, he still moves pianos and tows vehicles which get mired in the sand of Duxbury Beach. His garage includes a repair shop, and an automobile agency. He no longer sells Pontiacs, but still sells a line of Scouts and International trucks.

"I still have a supply of cameras, watches and other items, including a driver's license, left with me in lieu of payment."

At town meeting, Walter sits close to the microphone, always ready to champion a cause however unpopular. It may take him years to get his point across, but he never gives up without a persistent battle. Although Walter was instrumental in getting the original zoning ordinance (calling for 20,000 sq. ft. minimum lots and a 100-foot frontage), at a time when Duxbury was opposed to any form of restraint, he fought against increasing lot sizes later to 30,000, then 40,000 square-foot minimums.

He is currently leading a campaign to put Powder Point Bridge back into operation.

In his spare time, Walter collects equipment at auctions and government sales. We asked him whether he ever picked up anything unusual. "Nothing I can think of," he said. "Of course there was that big stainless steel freezing unit I bought about 15 years ago at Camp Devens. It has 6 sliding doors designed to house stiffs. I thought it would be suitable for steaming lobsters. It is still being used to keep vegetables refrigerated."

Another time he bought, without taking a close look, some surplus army overcoats, only to learn that they were oversize garments designed to cover soldiers with knapsacks. "I lost money on that deal. I didn't have enough hump-backed customers." He also came cropper when he bought sight unseen a load of turnbuckles, which cost him only a few dollars. Shipping charges, however, came to over \$100. The turnbuckles looked large enough to hold the George Washington Bridge together. Walter used them as ballast on his snow-plowing trucks until he finally sold them at a profit to a New York customer.

One of Walter's specialties has been moving houses from place to place. Francis Perry's house, perched on an upgrade off Temple St., was moved from the edge of West St. In one major operation Walter assisted in moving 3 houses from the Gurnet to Landing Rd. on a barge over Duxbury Bay. He turned the Masonic building on Washington St. and joined it to a parish house and moved part of the old Myles Standish Hotel to another site on Standish Shore (the house, now on Marshall St. is owned by Faneuil Adams.)

He shifted a large barn that was converted into part of the big house on South Station St. formerly owned by Kirby Kellar. On his own 4-acre lot off Enterprise St. are 4 interesting structures: the old South Duxbury freight house, the Duxbury freight house, the former Green Harbor Depot, and the old Ashdod schoolhouse which he moved from Keene St. From the Wright estate at different times, he moved the water tower and potting shed. The tower is now a glassed studio with domed ceiling in the John Cutler house on Surplus St., and the potting shed has been converted into the living room of the house with the massive original beams showing.

Walter Prince has also moved many buildings in various Plymouth towns.

As chairman of the salvage committee of the Committee on Public Safety during WWII, Prince collected metal, paper, tin cans, rubber, rags and tires. Also, 2,000 pairs of old silk and rayon stockings were collected, as well as furs and old clothes.

Retire?

Retire at the age of 77? Walter hates even to slow down. On April 25 he personally trucked ten tons of mix for a tennis court to Wolfboro, New Hampshire, after loading his truck at the railroad in Kingston. He still runs his automobile agency, still rigs and moves buildings, still drives an International truck the 900 miles from Fort Wayne, Indiana, with a smaller vehicle loaded on the truck, and another car in tow. He makes another trip to Springfield, Ohio, usually stopping 2 or 3 times on the way back to take a brief nap.

Walter believes in the Latin proverb, "Labore est orare" (To work is to pray). He enjoys keeping busy, adding that the only reason he is tempted to retire is to get rid of paper work. But his legs aren't what they used to be. He admits he can't crawl under buildings the way he once did.

"I can still pick up one end of a piano, but I can't carry it far. I think this is one way the Lord is trying to keep me from over-exerting."

On its own Silver Anniversary, the **Duxbury Clipper** salutes Walter Prince for his tact, vision, courage, forbearance and for his love of a town whose charm and beauty he has done so much to maintain.